(a) the total amount mobilized by Government through small savings during the last five years, year-wise and state-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Department of Posts has decided to dematerialize the postal saving instruments;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how it helps last mile class of investors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Total amount deposited through small savings during the last five years, year-wise and state-wise break up given in the Annexure [*See* Appendix 200, Annexure No. 2]

(b) Yes.

(c) The Department of Posts has started a six-month pilot from 16th October, 2003 to give the option to the investors in 10 Post Offices of Mumbai to get their NSC & KVP in a dematerialized form at no extra cost and with all the facilities currently available in the paper saving certificates.

(d) Advantage to investors are as enumerated below :-

- Convenience arising from making a single visit to the Post Office for the entire life cycle of investing in the instrument (including purchase and redemption).
- Consolidation of multiple holdings in a single account.
- Dispensation of the need to hold physical paper which is perishable as well as unsafe.
- Secure mode of retaining the savings, as it is tamper-proof.
- Automatic redemption on due date.
- Continuation of all the existing facilities relating to transfer and pledge, make nominations etc.

**Capacity of Mobile and WLL Services**

226. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the existing and proposed capacity of mobile and WLL services indicating target fixed for each location in the North-Eastern Region being and to be implemented by BSNL and private parties shown separately, location wise; and

(b) the steps taken and achievement made towards infrastructure development of IT and telecom sectors in the region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The Licence Agreement for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service and guidelines for Unified Access Services, *Inter-alia*, provides that in Telecom Circles, atleast 10% of the District Headquarters (DHQs) will be covered in the first year and 50% of the Disrtrict Headquarters will be covered within three years of effective date of Licence. The Licensee shall also be permitted to cover any other town in a District in lieu of the District Headquarters. The choice of District Headquarters/towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50% District Headquarters/towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on its business decision. As such, the Government does not monitor the private Service Providers' plans in respect of the number of lines (mobile and WLL) to be provide/earmarked for a city/town/State in a particular Service Area.

As regards Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), the existing and proposed capacity and target dates location-wise for Cellular Mobile and WLL Phones is enclosed as Annexure. [*See* Appendix 200, Annexure No. 3]

(b) The Government has opened up the Telecom sector for private participation in a phased manner since early nineties. The National Telecom Policy-1994 and New Telecom Policy-1999 (NTP-99) have recognized the significance of development of Telecom infrastructure in the country and accordingly the Government have taken steps to achieve the policy objectives. This has resulted in deployment of latest technologies by the Service Providers to provide world-class telecom services as well as steep reduction in telecom tariff.

As regards the IT sector, information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.